

REMARKS

With this amendment, Applicants amend claims 7, 24-25, 32-33, 40-41 and cancels claims 1-6, 8-9, 11-18, 20, 26, 28, 34-36, 42, 45-46, 48-50, 53-56, 58-60 and 63-66 without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is added. Therefore, claims 7, 10, 19, 21-25, 27, 29-33, 37-41, 43-44, 47, 51-52, 57, and 61-62 are all the claims pending in the present application.

I. Formal Matters

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging receipt of the certified copy of the priority document submitted July 6, 2000, and for acknowledging the claim to foreign priority.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating approval of the drawings filed on July 6, 2000.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging receipt of the Information Disclosure Statements filed July 6, 2000, and July 16, 2001 and for considering the references cited therein.

II. Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 7, 10, 23, 31, 39, 47, and 57 because of informalities. Applicants submit that the amendment to claim 7 as set forth herein obviates the objection.

III. Rejection of Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 35, 53, 55-56, 63, and 66 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 35, 53, 55-56, 63, and 66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants

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submit that this rejection is moot given that claims 1, 3-4, 6, 35, 53, 55-56, 63, and 66 are herein canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

IV. Rejection of Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 45-46, 54-56, and 64-66 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over AAPA in view of Tischler

Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 45-46, 54-56, and 64-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art (AAPA) in view of Tischler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,679,152; hereinafter "Tischler"). Applicants submit that this rejection is moot given that claims 1, 3-4, 6, 45-46, 54-56, and 64-66 are herein canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

V. Rejection of Claims 8-9, 11, 48-49, 58-59, and 66 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over AAPA in view of Tischler and further in view of Studholme

Claims 8-9, 11, 48-49, 58-59, and 66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Tischler as applied to claims 3-4, and further in view of Studholme et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,323,008). Applicants submit that this rejection is moot given that claims 8-9, 11, 48-49, 58-59, and 66 are herein canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

VI. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner indicates that claims 24-25, 32-33, and 40-41 "would be allowable if rewritten [into] independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." (*See* pg. 4 of the Office Action). With this Amendment, Applicants amend

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claims 24-25, 32-33, and 40-41 into independent form, including all the limitations of the base claims and intervening claims. Applicants therefore respectfully request the allowance of claims 24-25, 32-33, and 40-41.

Additionally, the Examiner indicates that claims 7, 10, 23, 31, 39, 47, and 57 “would be allowable if rewritten .. to overcome the objections set forth in [the] Office Action.” (*See* pg. 4 of the Office Action). As discussed above, claim 7 has been amended as set forth herein and Applicants submit that the amendment to claim 7 obviates the objection. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the allowance of claims 7, 10, 23, 31, 39, 47, and 57.

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VII. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

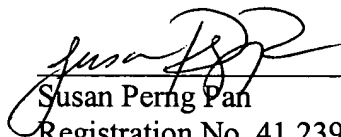
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Date: June 7, 2005